United Nations S/2017/52

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 January 2017

Original: English

Identical letters dated 18 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to inform you of an alarming increase in the volume of attempts to smuggle prohibited goods into the Gaza Strip. In 2016, Israeli security forces thwarted 1,226 such attempts, which constitute a 165 per cent increase in comparison with 2015.

The prohibited goods which were confiscated included drones, small unmanned aerial vehicles, lasers and military uniforms. Such materials are used by terror organizations in Gaza to enhance their terror capabilities.

This worrisome trend is taking place while Israel is making significant efforts to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Gaza, despite the evident security risks that follow. In 2016, the Government of Israel facilitated a 13 per cent increase in the amount of Israeli goods crossing into the Gaza Strip in comparison with 2015. This resulted in a total of 175,000 trucks, including a monthly high of 890 trucks per day in the month of October.

Unfortunately, this increase that Israel has facilitated is being abused by terror organizations attempting to smuggle prohibited materials into Gaza.

The illicit weapon and dual-use material smuggling activity perpetrated by terror organizations not only poses a danger to Israel's civilian population, but also hinders the ability of humanitarian assistance organizations operating in Gaza to work effectively. By doing so, these terror organizations are, first and foremost, harming the people of Gaza.

As Israel has reiterated many times before, the internationally designated terror organization Hamas consistently diverts and confiscates resources dedicated to the humanitarian development needs of Gaza residents, and repurposes them to their military objectives — digging terror tunnels, constructing training camps and manufacturing rockets.

The Secretary-General, António Guterres, emphasized in his speech at the Security Council's open debate on 10 January 2017 the importance of conflict prevention. Preventing Hamas and other terror organizations from rebuilding their military infrastructure — stockpiling weapons and rebuilding their system of terror tunnels — should be the first step taken in order to prevent further suffering among both Israelis and Palestinians.

17-00876 (E) 240117

Please recycle

I call on the Security Council to condemn Hamas and other terror organizations for their reprehensible smuggling activity.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative